

THE

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# THE SHEKEL



VOLUME XLVI NO. 5 SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2013



# 100 YEARS of fighting for justice

- Ceremonial use of silver coins by Isaac Matitia
- The pencil, the eraser and Hyman Lipman
- A.I.N.A. at ANA 2013
- New online: [www.theshekel.israelmint.com](http://www.theshekel.israelmint.com)



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The American Israel Numismatic Association (AINA) was founded in 1968 as a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the study and appreciation of Israel's numismatics, past and present, and all aspects of Judaic numismatics. More information is available on our web site [www.theshekel.org](http://www.theshekel.org). Articles and Letters to the Editor are invited to be submitted to *The Shekel* Editor Andrew Perala. Advertisers: Annual ad rates are \$750 for a full page and \$200 for 1/5 page; please contact Mel Wacks.

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# THE SHEKEL

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SEPTEMBER OCTOBER 2013  
ANDREW PERALA, EDITOR

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# THANKS!

First, I want to thank our members. We appreciate you and hope that we are earning your continued support by giving you an outstanding magazine - voted as the Outstanding Specialty Numismatic Publication by the American Numismatic Association.

Next, I want to thank our contributors, who prepare articles with no remuneration except the satisfaction in knowing they will be read and enjoyed by our members. This issue, I am especially pleased to welcome the youngest writer in more than 45 years of publishing *The Shekel*. I hope that Isaac Matitia's well-written article will encourage many more articles from our members.



Author Isaac Matitia and his younger brother Abraham Matitia with Mel Wacks at the 2013 Chicago ANA Convention.

Isaac's proud dad, Robert, brought Isaac and his younger brother Abraham to the AINA table at the ANA where we had a chance to chat, and Donna took the picture shown.

I also want to sincerely thank the Israel Coins and Medals Corporation for printing the Shekel for us in Israel at no charge. They are also actively promoting AINA on their website [www.israel mint.com](http://www.israel mint.com), where you will find my new blog

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

on Israel and Judaic Numismatics at [www.theshekel.israelmint.com](http://www.theshekel.israelmint.com).

Please visit often, and we welcome your comments and feedback.



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We apologize that *The Shekel* is still coming out late. Andy continues to recover from his heart surgery, and we hope to get back on schedule as soon as possible. Thanks for bearing with us.

Happy collecting,

*Mel*

# Number One Money Man

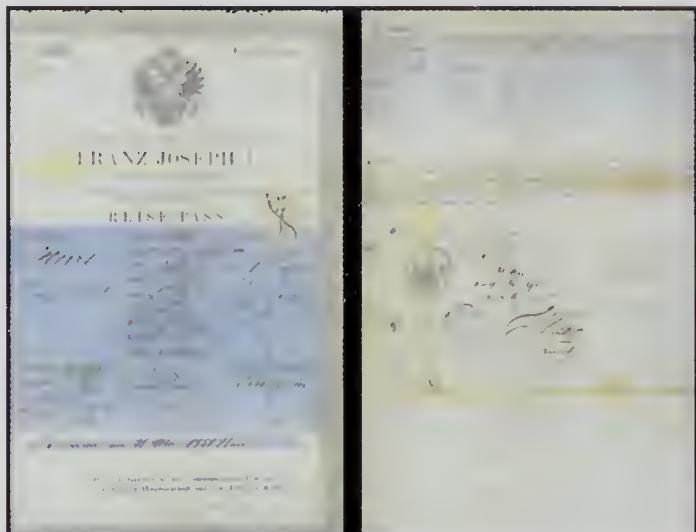
## Judaica

### Denmark Ag



High relief silver medal (45 grams - 40mm) commemorates 50th anniversary of Danish Jewish community escape from the clutches of Germans. Created by Danish artist, engraver and medalist Bent Jensen, this piece features a reverse of Holger Danske, a national hero, and an obverse with Jews between the maps of Denmark and Sweden.

### Herzl Passport



1850 Franz Joseph I official passport for Israel Herzl (24x40 cm). Sealed with signed revenue stamp, dated 1850. In 1815, Austria emerged from Napoleonic Wars as a powerhouse; the Hapsburgs returned to rule. This single-page passport (Reise-Pass) bears all information about Israel Herzl, including name, character, birthplace, birth year, religion, stature, hair color etc. All signed by the Gov. & General Commander of the Serbian region of Timis, western Romania and Banate, Southern Hungary. Finely printed in large format (about 9x16 inches) in blue with a decorative border. Document dated 1850, sealed with signed revenue stamp. Theodore (Tivadar/Binyamin Ze'ev) Herzl was born in Pest (the other side of Buda - Hungary), his family had come from Zemun (present day Serbia, by Belgrade on the Danube). But Herzl was a common name, so it could be a relative or not.

### Houghton

Works of Art from Houghton Jews - Hardcover Christie's London, 8 December 1994. Edition provides extensive information about Philip & Sybil Sassoon and their magnificent holdings. 361pp; near perfect condition; no folds, notations or markings. Unopened.

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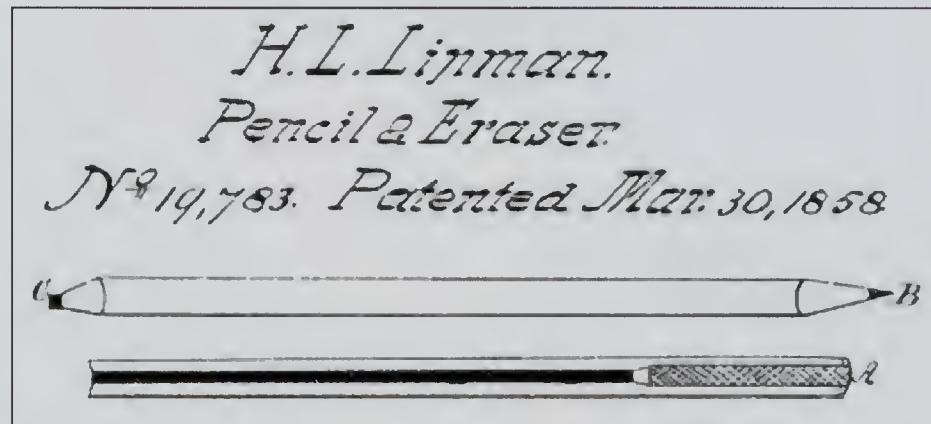


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# A pencil, an eraser and Hymen Lipman



Above, left: H. L. Lipman (1817 to 1893) inventor of the pencil with an eraser built in, an innovation that is the direct ancestor of today's modern writing instrument. Above, right: Lipman's drawing for a pencil with built-in eraser in his 1858 U.S. Patent Application.

By Mel Wacks

I am always looking for stories that would be appropriate in *The Shekel*. So while I was reading “Who Made That?” (Built in Eraser) in the Sept. 15, 2013 *Sunday New York Times Magazine*, my radar beeped when I read the opening sentence: “In 1858, a stationer named Hymen Lipman patented a newfangled pencil with a rubber plug embedded in one end of its wooden shaft.”

Hmmmm, I thought, Hymen Lipman sounds Jewish. So I quickly checked out this possibility—us-

ing Google. (For those readers who are not computer-savvy, Google is a search engine that alerts you to texts containing any terms that you are seeking—in this case “Hymen Lipman Jewish.”) On a website named tutorgigpedia.com, I learned that: “Hymen L. Lipman was born March 20, 1817, in Kingston, Jamaica, to English parents. He emigrated to the United States around 1829 with them, arriving in Philadelphia, Pa., where he resided for the remainder of his life. In 1840,

*Continued*

# Story of modern pencil a tale of discovery

*Continued*

*Lipman succeeded Samuel M. Stewart, then the leading stationer in Philadelphia. Three years later, he started the first envelope company in the U.S. In 1848, he was married to Mary A. Lehman, daughter of Peter Lehman, one of the founders of the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. ”*

So not only did Hymen Lipman sound Jewish, but his wife Mary Lehman also had a Jewish-sounding surname.

Next, I found the statement “*Hymen Lipman [was] a Jewish inventor who lived in Philadelphia*” on the website of *The Jewish Chronicle* (London). They should know, since Lipman’s parents were English.

Okay, so he was Jewish.

*Continued*



*Photograph by Esther Wacks*

*Mel Wacks is shown with a massive “Dixon Ti-conderoga” that was given to his daughter for her Bat Mitzvah by Mel and his wife Esther. Dr. Debra Wacks went on to prepare the Index to “The Shekel” Volumes XVI-XXV 1983-1992.*

# Pencils as currency, objects of art



Images courtesy Bob Busby [www.linkvillecoins.com](http://www.linkvillecoins.com)

*A brass token, 21 millimeters in diameter, issued in Nome, Alaska, prior to 1910, "Good for one lead pencil." Attribution by noted Alaska Token dealer Kaye Dethridge and published by Ronald J. Bernice in his authoritative "Alaska Tokens Second Edition," 334 pp, 1994, published by the Token and Medal Society (TAMS).*

*Continued*

Next I had to find a numismatic tie-in. I figured that a pencil, hopefully with an eraser, must have appeared on an art medal someplace.

But Google couldn't find anything. I searched through several exhibition catalogs published by the International Federation of Medalllic Art, but found nothing.

But I didn't give up. I then Googled "pencil token" and lo and behold I found something.

It is an undated token issued in Nome, Alaska, with an inscription on the reverse indicating "GOOD FOR ONE LEAD PENCIL." Hopefully, it was one with an eraser!

Pencils as currency would also be seen in the Great Depression when men scrambling to earn

money for their families would sell pencils on the streets of many cities in the U.S. and, indeed, around the world.

An article on pencils in [www.encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com) gives further details on the development of the modern pencil:

*"On 30 March 1858, Hymen Lipman received the first patent for attaching an eraser to the end of a pencil. In 1862, Lipman sold his patent to Joseph Reckendorfer for \$100,000 [about two million dollars today], who went on to sue pencil manufacturer Faber-Castell for infringement.*

*"In 1875, the Supreme Court of the U.S. ruled against Reckendorfer."*

*Continued*

# Lipman also co-invented post card



A post card of Lipman's imprinted "Lipman's Postal Card. Patent Applied For."

*Continued*

An excerpt of their ruling follows:

*"In the case we are considering, the parts claimed to make a combination are distinct and disconnected. Not only is there no new result, but no joint operation.*

*"When the lead is used, it performs the same operation and in the same manner as it would do if there were no rubber at the other end of the pencil; when the rubber is used, it is in the same manner and performs the same duty as if the lead were not in the same pencil.*

*"A pencil is laid down and a rubber is taken up, the one to write, the other to erase; a pencil is turned over to erase with, or an*

*eraser is turned over to write with.*

*"The principle is the same in both instances. It may be more convenient to have the two instruments on one rod than on two. There may be a security against the absence of the tools of an artist or mechanic from the fact that the greater the number, the greater the danger of loss.*

*"It may be more convenient to turn over the different ends of the same stick than to lay down one stick and take up another.*

*"This, however, is not invention within the patent law, as the authorities cited fully show. There is no relation between the instruments in the performance of their several functions, and no recipro-*

*Continued*

# Patent office overruled by Supreme Court



*A commemorative medal for the 100th anniversary of the U.S. Patent Office originally described as: "A handsome medal of pure aluminum bearing the seal of the patent office and the inscription 'Patent Centennial Celebration, Washington, April 10, 1891.'"*

*Continued  
cal action, no parts used in com-  
mon. We are of the opinion that for  
the reasons given, neither the pat-  
ent of Lipman nor the improvement  
of Reckendorfer can be sustained,  
and that the judgment of the circuit  
court dismissing the bill must be  
affirmed."*

But Lipman did not refund the \$100,000 to Reckendorfer!

While the Alaska token was the only numismatic item I could - at least indirectly - tie in to Lipman, I also discovered an important philatelic connection at [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_P.\\_Charlton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_P._Charlton), again thanks to Google:

*"John Charlton invented the private postal card around the same time in 1861 in Philadelphia.*

*He copyrighted and patented the idea in the same year.*

*"He later transferred the rights to the idea to his friend and fellow printer Hymen Lipman who was also credited for the invention and who printed the postal cards with a decorative border and a small print reading 'Lipman's Postal Card. Patent Applied For.'*

*"Lipman's cards were also the ones that were first known as 'post cards.'"*

Since this article deals with two patents - for the eraser on a pencil and the post card - I thought it would be appropriate to end with a picture of an early medal celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Patent Office. And, of course, this was discovered with the use of Google. ☐

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*The Donald Stephens Convention Center's main entrance. At right, the staff of the Israel Coins and Medals Corp. at the ICMC booth in Chicago, 2013.*



# A.I.N.A. at the 2013 ANA “World’s Fair of Money” in Chicago

BY DONNA SIMS, NLG

The ANA had all the club tables again this year way in the back alongside the exhibits, but for some reason, we did have more foot traffic this year than in years past in this same location.

There are a few good reasons for working a club table: in addition to meeting new people, you get to know persons manning other club

tables; it's a lot of fun meeting the kids as they come around looking for the next question in the Trivia Treasure Hunt and trying to figure out the right answer; and you get to pay \$5 for one slice of pizza.

Now that was indeed a surprise.

In addition to taking a number of pictures for this annual story, I also

*Continued*

# MEMBERS WIN MAJOR A.N.A. AWARDS



*Simcha Kuritzky, AINA member and frequent contributor to "The Shekel," stands in front of his award-winning "Boy For Sale? Tokens for the Redemption of the Firstborn Son" exhibit at the 2013 World's Fair of Money convention of the American Numismatic Association.*

*Kuritzky also received the Women in Numismatics award for his exhibit, "Henrietta Szold and Her Legacy: Hadassah and Youth Aliyah." The Ira and Larry Goldberg Award for the best exhibit of "Coins that Made History" was also presented to Kuritzky for that exhibit.*

*Continued*

enjoyed running around the bourse floor having my picture taken with people that I knew personally.

I did make and take the time this year to go through the exhibit area and was thrilled to see a number of excellent exhibits done by some of our members.

All the exhibits were fabulous in my opinion. And as is my custom, I did seek out all AINA dealers present to say hello and was even able to chat for a few minutes at the Israel Coins and Medals booth.

The ICMC booth had the supreme spot this year – it was the first thing

*Continued*

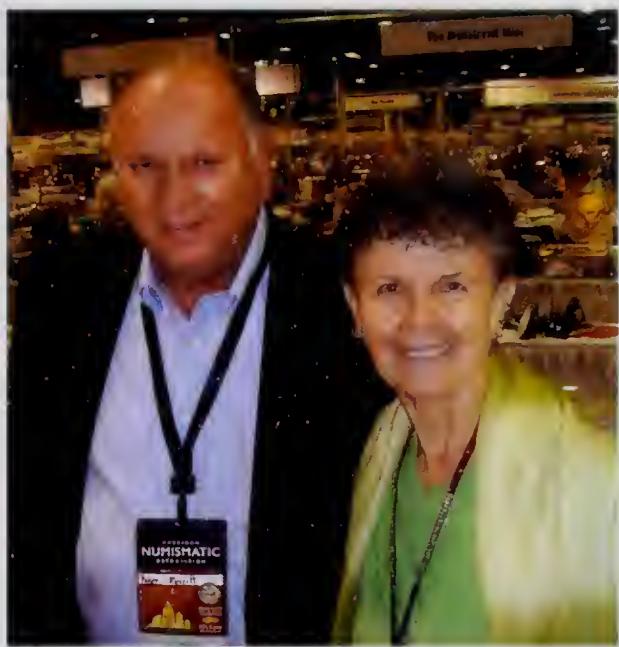


*The American Numismatic Association honored "The Shekel" with a First Place award in the "Outstanding Numismatic Specialty Publication" category of the ANA's 2013 member competition.*

# COLLECTORS, DEALERS GATHER



Yehud gerah with Persian head/Owl showing different attributes on coins from same dies



*Above, left: Mel Wacks and Bill Rosenblum.*

*Above, right: AINA Board Member Roger Merritt and Donna Simms (who also took all the photographs!).*

*At left: A screenshot of AINA Board Member and noted author David Hendin's numismatic presentation at the August 2013 "World's Fair of Money" convention of the American Numismatic Association.*

*Continued*

you saw as you entered the bourse area right at the front entrance, center-front.

This year, AINA gained a total of 10 new members, several being juniors. This brings our total membership at the time of this writing to 652.

The AINA board held its annual meeting on Wednesday evening, August 14, 2013.

Discussion and decisions made were:

(1) AINA is still holding its dues for 2014 at \$25 domestic, \$35 for-

eign and \$10 juniors;

(2) Since no additional names for this year's election of directors were received, the two current directors up for re-election were deemed duly re-elected – Mel Wacks and Michael Mooney;

(3) It was at this time the name of David Hendin, longtime AINA member and prominent numismatist, as AINA's newly appointed board member, congratulations David;

(4) Named officers are: Mel Wacks, president; Josh Prottas,

*Continued*

# ODED PAZ EARNS ODESSER AWARD



*Oded Paz, right, and Mel Wacks hold Oded's 2013 Ben and Sylvia Odesser Award, jointly presented by the Tokens and Medals Society and A.I.N.A.*

*Continued*  
vice-president; Roger Merritt, secretary and Donna Sims, treasurer; and

(5) AINA's upcoming annual medal will be of Sylvia Haffner, honoring her legacy in Israel numismatics.

The AINA Forum meeting was held Thursday afternoon with a room-full of attendees, each receiving something sweet to munch on.

The meeting began with the presentation of the annual Ben and Sylvia Odesser Award, jointly presented by TAMS and AINA, to Oded Paz, who was totally surprised.

Mark Lighterman, member of AINA and TAMS, did the honors of presenting the award.

I must say it was the first time most of us have ever seen Oded speechless. (And computer savvy members can see this presentation by searching for "AINA Meeting" on [www.youtube.com--courtesy of www.coinweek.com](http://www.youtube.com--courtesy of www.coinweek.com).)

Aviv Katz, CEO of the ICMC, presented a summary of what the ICMC has done this past year and what their plans will be for the upcoming year. This year's speaker was David Hendin, presenting an excellent slide program on "Recent Discoveries in Judaean and Biblical Numismatics".

Overall, the AINA table did remain busy most of the time and we look forward to next year, and the *2014 World's Fair of Money* back in Chicago. □

# A.I.N.A. MEMBERS MEET AT ANA 2013



*Above: Mr and Mrs Bill Rosenblum.*



*At left: Ray Burns and Domna Sims.*

*Below: Most of the AINA board and members of the ICMC team enjoy convivial companionship at dinner one evening during the 2013 ANA "World's Fair of Money" convention in Chicago.*





*At left: David T. Alexander and Donna Sims.*

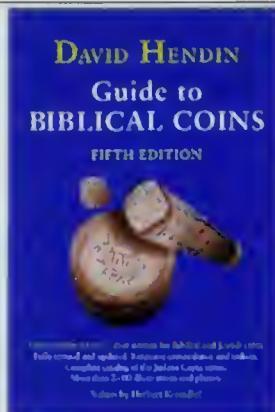


*At right: Ray Cline and Donna Sims.*



*At left: New AINA board member David Hordin and Donna Sims.*





## David Hendin's *GUIDE to BIBLICAL COINS*

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Leo lynching sparks ADL's push for justice*

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*The front page of the Atlanta Constitution newspaper following the abduction of Leo Frank from jail and subsequent lynching by a mob after his conviction for a murder he did not commit.*

of an innocent northern Jew by a southern court, the Anti-Defamation League took on the mission of fighting rampant anti-Semitism and discrimination against Jews.

Since then, as the ADL notes,

*Continued*

# *Religious Freedom*

## *The First Amendment*

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”



*Image courtesy Anti-Defamation League*

*The front of a 1963 commemorative medal, and the language of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States that has guided the activism of the Anti-Defamation League, which celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2013.*

*Continued*

many things have changed - mostly for the better - for Jews and other U.S. minorities.

Laws now exist to fight back against discrimination in hiring, education, housing, medical care and more.

For most Americans, the need to conceal one's past is no longer considered a part of daily life.

When offensive statements and caricatures appear in social and mass media, people stand up, and confront intolerance.

Overt racial and religious stereotypes are vanishing from most American popular culture.

The ADL has been at the forefront of these battles

Yet, anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry persist. Recent years have seen attacks on immigrants, Blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, gay men and lesbians.



*The Anti-Defamation League's 1963 commemorative medal spells out a fundamental goal of the ADL's founding and ongoing ideals powering its activism.*

Hatemongers have small but virulent communities. They still can inflict emotional suffering, bodily injury, property damage and destruction, even death.

In the face of these continued assaults on our cherished ideals of mutual respect and equal treatment for all, the mission of the ADL remains as important as ever: expose

*Continued*

# 1913 LYNCHING SPURRED ADL START

*Continued*

and combat the purveyors of hatred amongst us, responding whenever new challenges arise.

In recent years, the ADL protested admissions quotas at leading graduate schools.

Today's changing society requires the ADL to expose Internet sites devoted to Holocaust denial and white-supremacist propaganda.

In years past, the ADL challenged anti-Semitic ranting of demagogues like Father Coughlin. Today, the ADL remains vocal in opposition to Louis Farrakhan.

The ADL remains committed "to stand up for the core values of America against those who seek to undermine them through word or deed."

## בְּנֵי בְּרִית

The founding of the ADL arose from a brutal travesty of justice in 1913 Atlanta.

There, in a courthouse, a northern Jew, Leo Frank, was railroaded into a guilty verdict for a murder he did not commit.

Although his death sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment, Frank did not live out his days in prison.

The "Yankee Jew" was lynched in August 1915 by a mob that called itself a "vigilance committee."

The lynching of Leo Frank did not occur spontaneously.



*The obverse of a medal commemorating the 1959 convention of B'nai B'rith.*

At the dawn of the 20th century, anti-Semitism was everywhere in America.

East coast resorts typically advertised, "No dogs! No Jews!"

Major corporations had anti-Semitic policies in place for the hiring and firing of employees.

Magazines routinely featured "humorous" caricatures of Jewish people.

To establish an organization to openly fight this hateful discrimination took great courage.

In 1913, that courage was found by the lawyer Sigmund Livingston.

The beginnings were modest: two desks in Livingston's law office, \$200 and the sponsorship of the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith.

From the first, Livingston had a vision of the mission ahead: "to stop, by appeals to reason and

*Continued*

# ADL BLUNTS FORD'S ANTI-SEMITISM

## The Ford International Weekly THE DEARBORN INDEPENDENT

One Dollar

Dearborn, Michigan, May 22, 1920

12. Five Cents

### *The International Jew: The World's Problem*

*Continued*

conscience, and if necessary, by appeals to law, the defamation of the Jewish people. . . to secure justice and fair treatment to all citizens alike. . . put an end forever to unjust and unfair discrimination against and ridicule of any sect or body of citizens.”

Livingston recruited powerful allies. As the ADL notes in its official history, “early on, ADL took significant steps to eradicate the negative images of Jews in print and their stereotyping on stage and in the movies. The League was still in its infancy when Adolph S. Ochs, publisher of *The New York Times* and an ADL executive committee member, wrote a memo to newspaper editors nationwide discouraging the use of “objectionable and vulgar” references to Jews in the media.”

The power of the printed word in those days was considerable. Objectionable references to Jews in the press dropped dramatically

*At left: The front page of the Dearborn Independent at the height of owner Ford's rampant Anti-Semitism. The ADL secured a cessation of such bigoted media and an apology from Ford.*

*Below: The reverse of the 1959 B'nai B'rith convention that also commemorated Israel's 10th anniversary as an independent nation.*



within two years.

And by 1920, the formerly widespread practice had withered.

Influences outside the borders of the U.S. had influenced other media portrayals of anti-Semitism. As the Russian Revolution progressed, U.S. cartoonists had begun portraying the Bolshevik as “a Jewish countenance, hiding a bomb behind his back.”

The ADL followed the trail of these anti-Semitic portrayals, and found they came directly from the Associated Press.

*Continued*

# SYMBOLS CRYSTALLIZE LETHAL INTENT

Continued

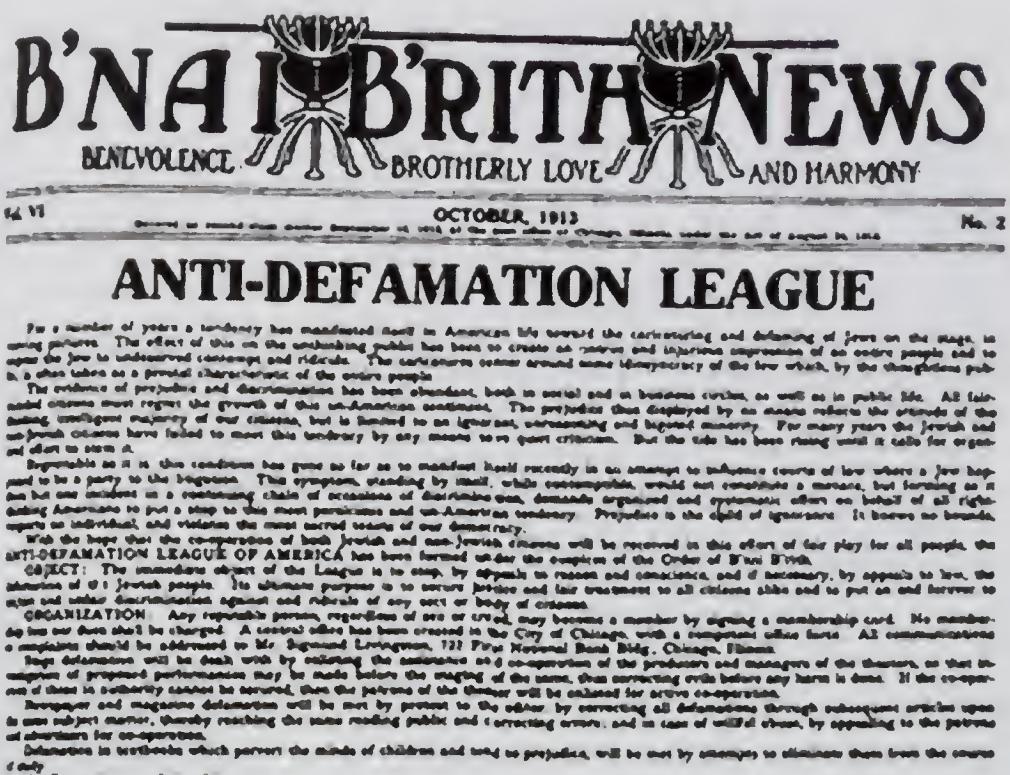
The ADL loudly and angrily protested. And the global wire service backed away from the practice of disseminating such portrayals.

In the 1920s, the ADL focused its attention on the dangers posed to all of society by the Ku Klux Klan. The history might be little remembered today, but “the Klan boycotted Jewish merchants, vandalized their stores and burned crosses outside synagogues and other Jewish institutions.”

The ADL also challenged industrialist Henry Ford’s spreading of the anti-Semitic forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, through his newspaper, *The Dearborn Independent*.

The ADL called upon former President Teddy Roosevelt as well as President Woodrow Wilson to denounce Ford’s anti-Semitism.

The process took years, but Ford eventually apologized to the Jewish people. As the ADL’s official history notes, “in a letter to ADL’s Sigmund Livingston, he expressed hope that “hatred of the Jews, com-



*The B'nai B'rith News announces the formation of the Anti-Defamation League with its support in 1913.*

monly known as anti-Semitism, and hatred against any other racial or religious groups, shall cease for all times.””

Other battles in the 1920s occupied the energies of the ADL, including housing, college admissions and more.

But the biggest challenge of all - and for all - was yet to come.

Beginning in the mid-1930s, the rise to power in Germany of a Nazi war machine first turned its lethal intent on Jews.

Far-right groups in the U.S. followed the lead of Germany. Prior to the full explosion of World War II and the Holocaust, Nazi flags and propaganda were paraded in the U.S. and anti-Semitic agitators gained a forum: “Fritz Kuhn of

Continued

# FIGHT FOR RIGHTS CONTINUES TODAY

*Continued*

the German-American Bund and Father Charles E. Coughlin, the progenitor of hate radio and leader of the pro-fascist Christian Front.”

Some of Coughlin’s writings were lifted directly from the propaganda of the Nazi psychopath Goebbels.

The ADL did a thorough analysis of Coughlin’s statements, and publicly, and effectively refuted his outrageous anti-Semitic claims.

“This evidence of Coughlin’s turning to Nazism helped discredit him in the eyes of many Americans,” the ADL notes.

The era’s urgency prompted the ADL to begin archiving its now-vast databank of detailed information on extremists, both individual and group.

In Europe, the fall toward oblivion continued. The Nuremberg Racial Laws of the mid-1930s sanctioned pogroms against Jews.

Then, in November 1938, attacks against Jewish shop owners and synagogues, instigated and approved at the highest levels, torched the Jewish world in Europe.

*Kristallnacht* proved to be the match that lit a conflagration of genocide, and more than 6 million were murdered.

The lesson of the events leading to *Kristallnacht* is taught today as one of the foundations of the horror

that followed, and as such must never be allowed to take root again.

¶¶¶¶¶

The birth of the independent nation of Israel on May 14, 1948 returned hope to a devastated people.

Yet, the struggle never really let up. The immediate enmity of Israel’s neighbors erupted into a series of wars that still threaten today, perhaps more so than ever with the extraordinary increase of lethality of weapons of mass destruction.

In the U.S. during the 1950s through modern days, the ADL continued its fight against bigotry and prejudice, unveiling in the ‘50s the Klan’s plans to re-ignite its war against blacks and Jews, joining the fight against McCarthyism and aiding the end of officially sanctioned “separate but equal” state statutes.

The 1960s gave rise to the fullest expressions of the battle lines between those who would continue to deny civil rights to all, and those who would resist. The ADL aided the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

These are just a few of the ADL’s early battles to gain fundamental civil and human rights to the oppressed.

Attacks against Jews and other oppressed groups are ongoing, and the next 100 years for the Anti-Defamation League likely will be just as busy as the first 100. ¶

# SILVER COIN USAGE AND SIGNIFICANCE

*FROM THE ANCIENT TIMES  
OF THE BIBLE TO MODERN DAY*



BY ISAAC MATITIA

*Image courtesy [www.annuseum.org/book](http://www.annuseum.org/book).*

*Silver sela of Bar Kochba, featuring the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Jerusalem, lulav and etrog, and the inscription "For the Freedom of Jerusalem" in ancient Hebrew.*

We see that silver has been used even in the earliest times, as exhibited in the Old Testament when, in Genesis 23: 15 Ephron tells Abraham that he will sell the Cave of Machpelah, which is currently in the modern city of

Hebron, Israel, to him for four hundred silver shekels.

When Abraham paid that significant sum of silver to Ephron he noted to him that this silver was "Ovar La'Socher"

*Continued*

# SILVER IMPORTANT IN SOME RITES

*Continued*

which is the Hebrew for “universally negotiable currency.”

We see that even back then; silver bullion was the worldwide currency.

We also see that in *Exodus* 30: 11-16, G-d tells Moses to take a census of the Jewish nation by collecting a half a shekel from each person, 20 or older, the amount not differing whether the person was poor or rich.

This further backs up the point that silver was, at all times, the world’s currency. Interestingly enough, many Jewish rabbis say that the reason why everyone gave a half of a shekel was because a nation must be united as “one” to be full and achieve greatness.

So this lesson was taught and reminded during the taking of the census, where each individual would contribute only a “half” shekel as opposed to a whole shekel, signifying his dependence on his fellowman and the need to be united with his fellowman.

Nowadays, the Jews give half coins of their host country’s standard unit of currency, so Jewish Americans give U.S. half dollars to charity during a certain ceremony, as a remembrance of the collecting of the half shekel.

Various half dollars throughout U.S. history that would typically be used include the Walking Liberty half dollar, the Ben Franklin half dollar, and the JFK half dollar.

Of course, coins that contain silver are preferred, but modern day half dollars that do not contain silver are also acceptable as a remembrance.

Further in the Bible, in several places in the Old Testament, there is reference to a “Pidyon Haben” which is a redemption of the first born male child or animal with five silver shekels from a “Kohen”

*Continued*



*The first Pidyon Haben coin, issued by Israel in 1970.*



*Privately issued Pidyon Haben silver medal. Courtesy [www.pidyonhaben.org](http://www.pidyonhaben.org).*

# MODERN U.S., ISRAEL COINS USED



Images courtesy [www.israelmint.com](http://www.israelmint.com).

*Pidyon Haben medal issued by the Israel Coins and Medals Corp. in 2005.*

*Continued*

which is a Priest Levite. It is referred to in *Exodus* 13:12-15, *Exodus* 22:29, *Exodus* 34:20, *Numbers* 3:45, *Numbers* 8:17, *Numbers* 18:16, *Leviticus* 12:2-4, and *Numbers* 3:9, 12-13.

Several kinds of coins or medals could be used, and some are even minted in Israel specifically for this purpose. Most popular in the United States is the use of five US Silver Eagles which are each one ounce of .999 silver! But really any five silver coins with at least 20 grams of silver will do, including: the American silver Eagle, the Vienna Philharmonic Silver bullion coin, the Chinese Panda silver bullion coin, the Australian silver bullion coin, the Maple Leaf Canadian silver bullion coin, the Israel Mint Pidyon Haben coins that were minted by the Israeli Government in the 1970's and two "Special Edition" Israel silver coins specifically used just for this ceremony.

Interestingly enough, at my Pidyon Haben 12 years ago, silver only cost \$12.50 a troy ounce; currently, silver is priced at about \$22 a troy ounce. My father used U.S. American Eagles in the ceremony.

Another subject that I found quite interesting relating to the minting and use of silver coinage in ancient times was The Great Revolt.

By the first century of the Common Era, Rome was the most dominant country in the world. They had conquered most of the "civilized" world, including Judaea.

The Romans tried to impose themselves, not only militarily and politically, but culturally too. Sometimes, they succeeded in bringing Jews to their culture, using different methods.

One of these methods to propagate the Roman culture was the minting and usage of Roman coinage in Judaea depicting the image of the Roman Emperor.

*Continued*

# ANCIENT IMAGES BALANCE MODERN



*Images courtesy Heritage Auctions/www.ha.com.*

*Extremely rare silver half shekel issued in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the Great Revolt (69/70 CE). The obverse shows a chalice with the year of the revolt above, surrounded by the inscription "Shekel of Israel" in ancient Hebrew. The reverse has three budding pomegranates with the inscription "Jerusalem the Holy."*

*Continued*

In the year 66 CE and again in 132, there were rebellions of the Judaeans against the power of Rome. During the Second Revolt, a Judaean leader Simon (Shimon) Bar Kochba was a brilliant military general.

Of great interest for numismatists about the rebellion was that Bar Kochba and his followers minted their own "Rebellion Coins."

They did this by rubbing or filing out the Roman Emperor faces and verbiage on the Roman minted silver coins on both the obverse and reverse of the coins and imprinted their own images and words.

They imprinted images such as the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and those of palm branches (lulav) and a citron (etrog), which are used by the Jews on the Festival of Sukkot.

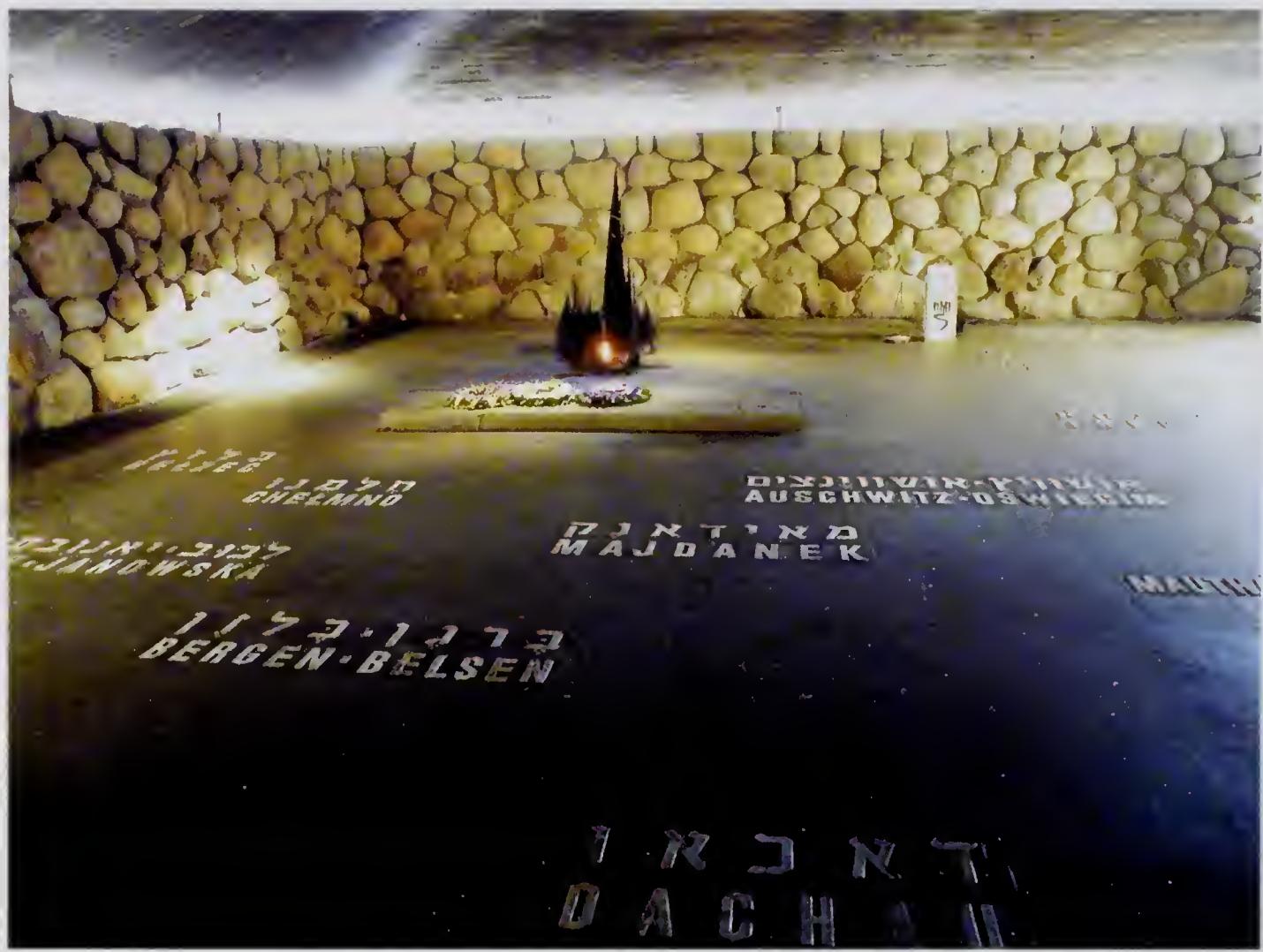
Also, the rebels imprinted words on the coins that spiked along the success of the rebellion such as "Year One of the Redemption of Israel" or "For the Freedom of Jerusalem." Some of these coins have a value of around \$2,000!

So we see that for both centuries past and modern times, the large and important role that coins, and particularly coins that are made of valuable metals such as silver, have significance not only as a monetary standard, but also are used to form and propagate religious, political and socio-economic viewpoints. □

*Author Isaac Matitia, age 12, is a member of A.I.N.A. and the American Numismatic Association.*

*This article, his first for "The Shekel," won Second Place in the ANA's 2013 Bill Fivaz "Young Numismatist Literary Award" program.*

# YAD VASHEM COMMEMORATIVES



*(Wikimedia image)*

BY MEL WACKS

*The Eternal Flame is a memorial on the grounds of the Yad Vashem Museum.*

For this year's Independence Day commemorative coin, Israel issued a particularly poignant design honoring the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yad Vashem, the Jewish people's living memorial to the victims of the Holocaust.

A portion of the proceeds from sales of the new coins will be donated by ICMC to Yad Vashem.

Israeli artist Yossi Lemel's stark image of a striped shirt with a Star of David, such as Jewish prison-

ers in concentration camps had to wear, contrasts dramatically with a bold contemporary Star of David rising behind—signifying that Am Yisrael Chai (“the people of Israel live”).

Authorized mintages are low: only 555 for the gold version and just 1,800 for the 1 New Sheqel silver coin.

By the way, did you know that the weight of the 2013 1 New

*Continued*

# ISRAEL 2103 COIN HONORS YAD VASHEM



*Above: The Yad Vashem Museum is on a hill overlooking Jerusalem. (Wikimedia image)*

*Top: Israel's Independence Day 1 New Sheqel silver issued on the anniversary of Israel's Independence commemorates Yad Vashem. Mintage is only 1,800 for the circulating commemorative coin.*

*Continued*

Sheqel silver coin, 14.4 gm. (about half an ounce), is the same weight as the ancient Jewish sheqels made during the First Revolt against the Romans (66-70 CE)?

Surprisingly, this is only the second time that an official Israel numismatic item has featured Yad Vashem!

The only other time was way

back in 1965, when large 59mm bronze medals were produced for presentation purposes, but were never sold to the public.

On these rare medals, Yad Vashem and the hills of Jerusalem were portrayed by the noted designer Nathan Karp.

Below, in Hebrew and French, are the words: "A token of gratitude from the Jewish people."

*Continued*

# YAD VASHEM MEDALS, COMMEMS RARE



*Above: The Hall of Names at the Yad Vashem Museum commemorates the millions who were murdered in the Holocaust. (Wikimedia image). Below: The obverse and reverse of a rare 1965 bronze medal commemorating Yad Vashem, a silver medal also was struck.*



*Continued*

These were given to Righteous Gentiles who saved Jewish lives, risking their own lives.

The name of the rescuer was inscribed on each medal. In 1965, there were only 50 bronze medals made, along with some in silver.

An unspecified quantity were made in 1980 in copper-nickel.

If you keep your eyes open, you might be able to secure one of these extremely rare inscribed bronze or silver medals from a coin dealer who is not aware of what he really has! ☩

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# EXODUS

## *The ship that found a country*



*The ship Exodus after the 1947 British takeover. Note the damage to the makeshift barriers. In 1928, the ship was named the SS President Warfield, in honor of Solomon Davies (1863-1927).*

BY SIMCHA KURITZKY

**S**olomon Davies Warfield was a native of Maryland whose niece, born Bessie Wallis Warfield, became the Duchess of Windsor and almost became Queen of England. Solomon was associated with a number of companies and was Postmaster of Baltimore from 1894 to 1905. He was President of the Continental Trust Company of Baltimore in 1908. Warfield also was President of the Baltimore Steam Packet Company from 1918 until his death in 1927.

The following year, the company named a new ship after him, the S. S. *President Warfield*. It was a luxury liner, running passengers and freight between Norfolk, Virginia and Baltimore until 1942, when it was transferred to the U.S. military and carried personnel to Europe for the war.

The military decommissioned the *Warfield* in late 1945. One year later, the *Haganah* bought her for \$60,000.

The Jewish people had been with-

*Continued*

# 1987 MEDAL HONORS EXODUS VOYAGE



The 1987 official state medal commemorative the voyage of the ship Exodus. Shown in the 35mm diameter gold version, of which only 1,000 were minted.

*Continued*

out a country of their own since the failed War Against Rome ended in 70 CE. Interest in reestablishing a Jewish state, even if it was a client state of the Ottoman Empire, rose in the 1800s as several organizations started building farms and villages, settling Jewish refugees there.

However, it was the Zionist Organization, founded by Theodor Herzl in 1897 and under the leadership of Chaim Weizmann that convinced the British to support a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel in 1917.

The 1920 Treaty of San Remo gave the British a mandate to administer the territory for the benefit of Jewish and gentile residents.

In 1919, Arabs attacked several Jewish villages and the British did not come to their aid. The Jews responded by creating their own militia, known as the *Haganah* (Hebrew

for Defense).

The British policy towards all their colonies was divide and conquer. It was clear that the Jews would not need British administration or support for long if they could peacefully codevelop the land with the Arabs, so the British curried favor with militant Arabs while at the same time confiscating from Jews all weapons they could find.

Fighting between Arabs and Jews intensified through the 1920s and 1930s, ending in a Nazi-financed rebellion by the Arabs against both the Jews and British (1936-39).

To appease the Arabs, the British severely restricted Jewish immigration at just the time the Jews of Europe most needed a place of refuge. The Nazis murdered around six million Jews, or over half the Jewish population of Europe, during World

*Continued*

# SHIP FIRST COMMISSIONED IN 1928



Image courtesy Simcha Knritzky

Solomon Davies Warfield, who was president of the Baltimore Steam Packet Company which commissioned the building of the ship that would become the Exodus, also was president of the Continental Trust Company of Baltimore in 1908 when the stock certificate above was issued, and his signature appears at bottom right.

*Continued*

War Two, and a quarter million were left in the camps or homeless at the end of the war. The Allies placed them in Displaced Persons (DP) camps in Europe, but most wanted to go to their own homeland, Israel.

The Jewish Agency, known also as the *Va'ad Leumi* (National Council), which ruled over the Jews under the British Palestine Mandate, started to subvert British control and bring Jews in clandestinely in 1934.

This was known as *Aliya Bet* or Type Two Immigration. More than a hundred thousand came in over the decade before Israel's independence

on 64 different ships or by land, but many others were captured by the British at sea.

After the War, the British opened internment camps for them in Cyprus, then a British colony. Many also died en route as the *Haganah* could not afford to buy well-outfitted ships.

The S. S. *President Warfield* was typical of the ships they bought; it was scheduled to be scrapped and was barely seaworthy. Nonetheless, it left Baltimore on February 25, 1947 and arrived in southern France where she took on more than 4,500 Jewish

*Continued*

# JEWS REFUSED ENTRY TO PALESTINE



*A political cartoon on the dire situation of the Exodus passengers. This political cartoon appeared in The New York Times and is now part of an historic exhibit at the U.S. Holocaust Museum. Image courtesy Simcha Kiritzky.*

*Continued*

refugees on July 11.

In 1987, Israel issued commemorative medals for the fortieth anniversary of the *Exodus 1947*. The medal's obverse shows the ship sailing to the left with the name in English (the Hebrew says European Exodus 5707) and the date the British seized the ship 18.7.1947.

The reverse shows a defiant fist breaking through barbed wire, holding the Zionist (now Israel's) flag. The medal was designed by Ruth Lubin, minted in 70mm bronze by Moshe Hecht of Tel Aviv, while the Government Mint in Jerusalem produced 37mm silver, and 13mm and 35mm gold versions.

The *Haganah* hoped that the British would see the derelict condition of the ship and permit it to dock on humanitarian grounds, as it could easily sink if attacked or ran into a

storm. The British had other ideas.

British intelligence had been monitoring the ship since March. The ship sailed under the Honduran flag, and the British got the Honduras government to revoke their certificate, but the ship was already in the Atlantic.

The British pressured the French to hold the ship, but France was happy to transfer their refugees elsewhere and let them be Britain's problem.

The British sent several ships to follow the *President Warfield*. On July 17, as the ship neared Israel's coast, the *Haganah* renamed her *Exodus 1947* and hoisted the Zionist flag.

The next day, the British seized the vessel. Two refugees and one crew member died in the brief battle and many were injured.

In May, the British handed the Palestine question over to the U.N. which formed the United Nations

*Continued*

# POLITICAL INTRIGUE MARRED LIVES

*Continued*

## Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP).

Britain's immigration policy was in direct conflict with their League of Nations mandate. The British could have issued immigration certificates to the refugees, scheduling their arrival for a few months or years in the future.

The official policy had been to intern them on Cyprus. Now the British decided to send a strong message to the Jews who dared to try to live in their own land: the British would return the ship to Europe and force the passengers back into D.P. camps. After putting down a riot, the British loaded the passengers onto three freighters and set sail for France.

Again, the French were less than accommodating to British plans. They would allow refugees to disembark but refused to permit the British to forcibly expel them.

Only 130 refugees left the ships, even though they lay in dock for three weeks.

The British, not wishing to bring Jewish refugees to Britain, instead took them to the British occupation zone in Germany. Members of the newly-formed UNSCOP tried to find other havens, but the Jews refused any destination other than Palestine. The Jews used the prospect of Britain handing concentration camp survivors back over to the Germans to full

advantage in the propaganda war.

The issue came before the British Cabinet, which could not come up with a better solution than to emphasize that the camps in Lübeck were run by the British with German civilians holding only the most menial positions.

Two hundred reporters were on hand to cover the unloading of refugees in Hamburg on September 8. Exhausted by their ordeal, many of them ill, most women and children gave only passive resistance to being off loaded. However, the men and some women gave the British a fight; 33 Jews and three British were injured.

The British plan was to keep their military in the camps only until the refugees were all registered. The refugees refused to cooperate, part in fear that they would give up their status as passengers in transit to Palestine, and part to inconvenience the British.

The refugees from *Exodus 1947* and those Jews who had already been in the camps Pöppendorf and Am Stau held demonstrations against their imprisonment.

After a week, the British allowed the Red Cross and Jewish relief organizations into the camps. Finally, on October 6, the British troops left and handed the administration over to a Jewish committee.

Shortly after this ordeal, UNSCOP

*Continued on Page 40*

# FIRST TIME IN HISTORY



- First time a mint in China produces a numismatic piece with a Jewish theme.
- First time a Chinese mint etches every medal with a number for definitive identification.
- First time mint designer Rocky Zhao collaborates with his father, Qiming Zhao, the legendary engraver of Chinese paper money and stamps.



Commemorating the 70th anniversary of the forceful relocations of ≈ 18,000 European Jewish WWII refugees by the occupying Japanese into a restricted area, The Shanghai Ghetto.

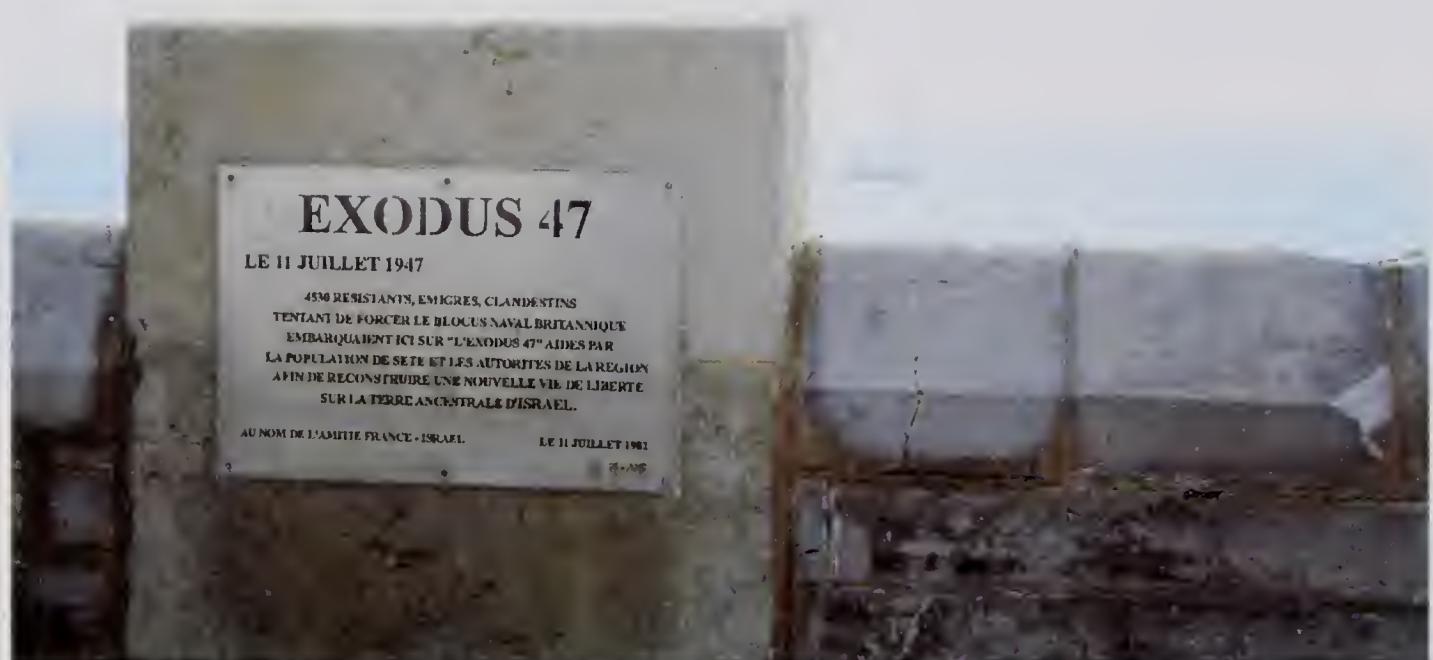


Rocky Zhao and Qiming Zhao present 92 year old Gary Matzdorff with etched set #39 in China. In 1939, Gary was fortunate to escape Germany and find refuge in Shanghai. In 1948, he settled in America.

QTY	OZ.	Metal	Pricepedia
36	5	Gold	PAN594A
570	1	Gold	PAN595A
5773	1	Silver	PAN596A

For more incredible details on the history of this series, inquiries and distribution info visit [WhyNotCollectibles.com/ChinaFirst](http://WhyNotCollectibles.com/ChinaFirst)

# EXODUS STORY TRAGEDY, TRIUMPH



*A plaque commemorates the embarkation point of the ship Exodus 1947 on the French coast from the small port of Sete, near the port city of Marseilles.*

*Continued from Page 38*

recommended that what was left of the British Mandate of Palestine (after Transjordan was granted independence in 1946) be partitioned into independent Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem under international control.

It is widely believed that the suffering of the Jewish refugees in the D.P. camps as exemplified by the passengers of *Exodus 1947* was responsible for this historic decision.

The proposal passed the General Assembly on Nov. 19, 1947.

In a rare moment of Cold War solidarity, both the United States and the Soviet Union supported the proposal.

Once the guards left, most of the Jews sneaked into the American occupation zone of Germany, and by various means either got to Palestine or were imprisoned on Cyprus.

Only 1,800 of the *Exodus 1947* passengers remained in Germany when the British formally abandoned their mandate and Israel declared her independence in May, 1948.

While both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. immediately granted diplomatic recognition to Israel, Britain waited until the first armistices were signed in January 1949, and only then began transporting Jewish refugees from Cyprus to Israel.

The ship itself remained moored in Haifa until it caught fire in 1952 while attempts were made to restore it. Part of the hull was sold as scrap, part still remains scattered along Israel's coast. □

*The author Simcha Kuritzky is Editor of "The Maryland Numismatist" in which this article first appeared.*

# THE COINAGE OF CONVENIENCE

*The paper-thin, silver uniface bracteates of 12th-century Poland were often restruck; an advantage for many, including the coiners who wrote in Hebrew on the coins*



BY ANDREW PERALA

In the 12th century CE, as northeast Europe began its long climb out of the “Dark Ages,” the founding dynasty of Great Poland’s first monarchs entered its most tumultuous era.

The Piast family would rule Great Poland’s dozen or so duchys from

980 CE to 1370 CE with a High Duke holding the reins of supreme power over all.

But for several decades at the end of the 12th century, and leading into the near-Renaissance period of the early 13th century, the High Duke

*Continued*

# SPATE OF DUKES CREATES OPPORTUNITY



*Images courtesy Goldberg Auctions (Previous page); Stack's-Bowers, above*

*Previous page: A bracteate ca. 1211 shows a high relief obverse and the negative image on reverse. The Hebrew text reads "Blessing" and is a type of bracteate of the era.*

*Above: A robed figure holds a lily-topped scepter, annulet above. Struck during rule of Leszek I (1194 to 1227, intermittent). There are no Christian symbols, yet the figure appears priestly. Possibly the work of a master Jewish coiner. Researchers suggest personage depicts the High Priest Aaron, contemporary of Moses, founder of the Israelite priesthood.*

*Continued*

throne was contested fiercely, with brother against brother, and mothers sometimes taking one brother's side over the other.

The state of the state was, frankly, a mess.

But a rare combination of an often downtrodden social group and the recycling of a specific type of low denomination silver coin gave continuity in a time of great upheaval.

And the Jewish community of the region was central to this island of calm amidst the political tempest.

Jews had first moved to the region in late 900s, and found a haven of tolerance rare throughout Europe.

The first permanent community was established by 1085, according

to the contemporary German Rabbi and scholar Yehuda ben-Meir.

The atmosphere of tolerance came from the top, from the High Duke position, and was first enunciated by Boleslaw III (1109 to 1132).

This haven was so safe, so secure in the early iteration of the country we know today as Poland that it quickly grew into Europe's largest Jewish community of the time.

As modern researchers have noted, after the Jewish expulsion from Spain, the region also became a spiritual and cultural center.

Ironically, their first patron guardians, the Piast dynasty, kept the peace for all except for their own family during nearly four centuries of rule.

*Continued*

# OFFICIALS SANCTION JEWISH SECURITY



An 1874 oil by Polish painter Wojciech Gerson (1830 to 1901) depicts the imagined meeting of Casimir III "The Great" in a work called "Reception of the Jews." Casimir III (reigned 1333 to 1370) extended protection to the Jewish faith and people.

*Continued*

And as the 12th century ended and the 13th century began, the Piast dynasty would see 15 changes of rule on the throne of the High Duke. This period of upheaval did not bring ruin upon the Jewish community. Instead, it opened more doors of opportunity.

For reasons yet unknown, a key craft necessary to the state tended to be mastered by Jewish craftsmen and artisans - the positions of celator and coiners. The celators created the hammer dies used to strike the uniface bracteate coins in wide use.

The coiners swung the hammers, kept count and delivered newly struck bracteates to the High Duke.

Since the seat of the High Duke was occupied by many different rumps - some of them serial Dukes - and since each change of regime meant all the old bracteates would be called in and exchanged for new bracteates with a new design heralding the new High Duke, there was real job security for the Jewish celators and coiners.

The Piast dynasty's problems stemmed from its lack of clarity in succession. Succession was not

*Continued*

# EACH NEW LEADER RESTRIKES COINS



*Images courtesy Stack's-Bowers Auctions*

*A bracteate struck during the reign of Leszek I (1202 through 1227) features two Fleur-de-Lis with Hebrew "Bracha" in exergue. Sold for \$2,300 in January 2013 at NYINC.*

*Continued*

clearly defined for the High Duke throne. A traditional patrilineal pattern - father to son - was often but not always followed.

Sometimes the High Duke's succession was determined through agnatic succession, from High Duke to his younger brother.

With High Dukes under no constraints upon which system of succession to choose, battles were constantly brewing between brothers and brothers, and uncles and mothers and more distant kin, all seeking the position, power and prestige of the High Duke throne.

But mostly, it was the exclusion of sons eagerly awaiting their turn to rule that caused most of the rebellions within the extended family of the Piast dynasty.

Exile was often the result for the

losing contender.

Occasionally, more direct means hastened succession: assassination.

Each time the High Duke seat of power changed - and often in between due to coining rights being given to (or in some cases appropriated by) powerful regional Christian bishops - the coins of the High Duke's region were called in and exchanged for new coins bearing new symbols and sometimes legends recognizing the new High Duke.

Of course, each exchange of the half-gram to one-gram silver coins was accompanied by a percentage fee paid to the High Duke.

This system of mandated coin exchanges is known as coin renewal or re-coinage, or in Latin, renovatio monetae, according to Roger Svens-

*Continued*

# 12TH CENTURY POLAND A HAVEN

*Continued*

son in his September 2013 research paper *The Bracteate as Economic Idea and Monetary Instrument* for Stockholm's Research Institute of Industrial Economics.

The bracteates of the region of Grand Poland and adjacent Germany were extraordinarily thin, uniface coins, between 0.05 and 0.20 millimeters in thickness. (in comparison, a U.S. 10-cent coin or dime is 1.35 mm thick).

The Polish bracteates were about 25 to 27 mm in diameter, or about the size of a U.S. 25-cent coin, the quarter.

This large diameter worked to balance the extremely thin coins by providing a large field for the striking of devices like portraits and legends. These large devices with their high relief helped stabilize what was inherently a fragile coin.

The fast turnover of the bracteate types also ensured survival of the greatest number in their politically shortened life spans.

The bracteate was the coin of preference in the region for several reasons. It was made of silver of a generally standard fineness, and because it weighed only between 0.5 and 1.0 grams, the bracteate was ideal for conducting the small-scale commerce that was burgeoning throughout Europe.

This economic growth was powered, in part, by the local Jewish

populations.

Jews had been encouraged to move to the region of Poland under the benignly tolerant regime of Boleslaw III "Wrymouth" (1107 to 1138).

His son, Mieszko III (who ruled as High Duke or Prince five times between 1173 to 1202) went further, placing an edict of protection for Jews that prevented anyone, even Christian clergy, from harming Jews. Any act of violence against them was considered "sacrilegious."

Perhaps there was a humanitarian angle to this beneficence; more likely it was due to Princely awareness of the benefits the Jewish population brought to the communities beyond the coining of re-coinages.

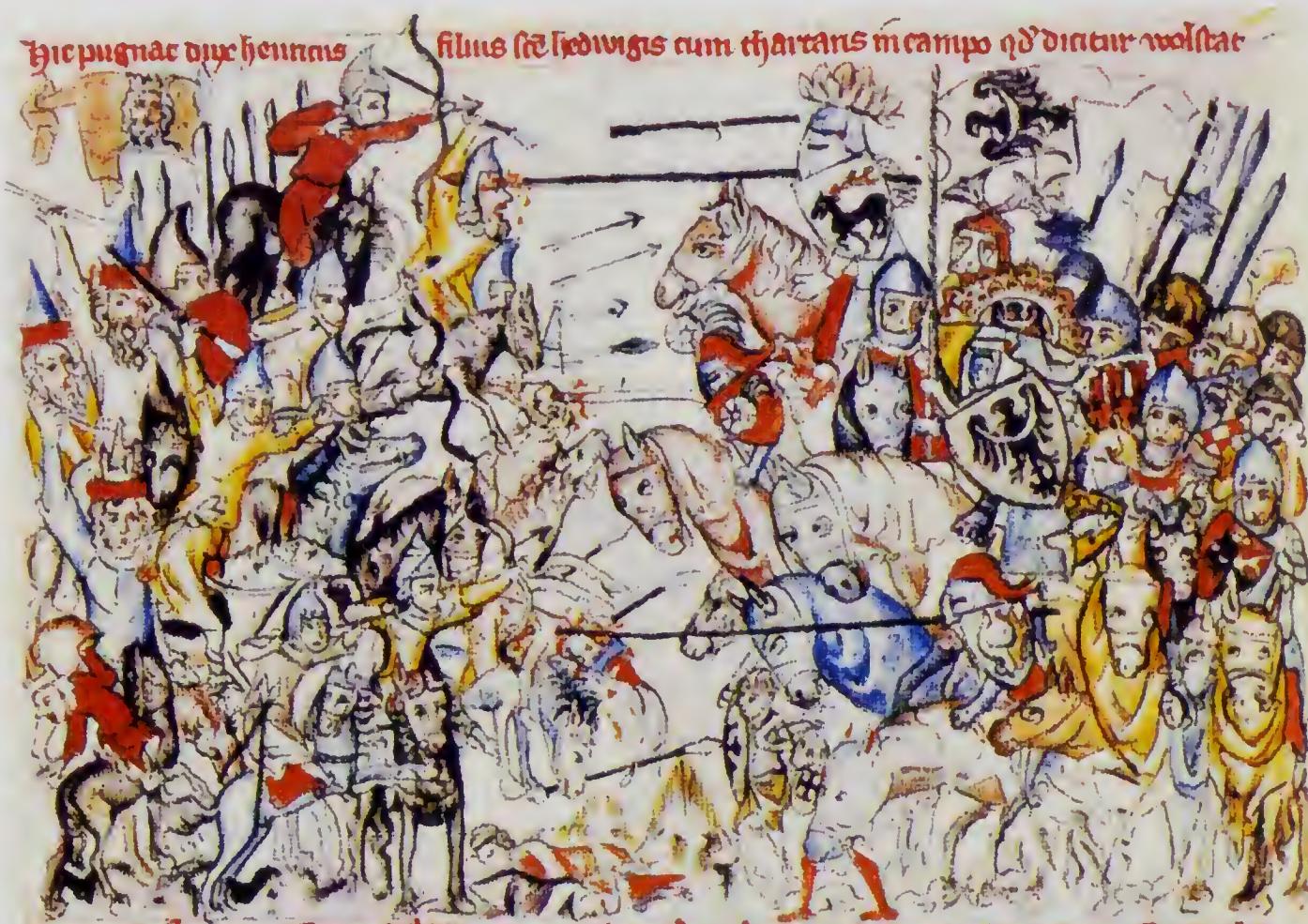
With astute business owners in their midst, Jews formed the first "middle class" of the era, which was still locked into a landlord and serf arrangement dating back to the darkest of the Dark Ages.

Jews would eventually be granted exclusive rights to specific businesses that helped the whole region grow economically, including the pre-cursor to modern banking, money-lending. That right came at a price though: Jews were considered "slaves" of the High Duke.

The mostly benign oversight and stated protection for the region's Jews continued to the reign of Casimir

*Continued*

# EARLY JEWISH COMMUNITY THRIVED



A 1353 tapestry depicts the Mongol invasion of Poland in 1240-41. Poles united to fend off the Mongol attack, which was a diversion to another larger attack in Germany.

*Continued*

mir III “The Great” (1303-1370).

By then, the economic growth of the previous two centuries had brought increased immigration from Germany. Catholic clergy began drumbeats of accusations against Jews that eventually reversed hundreds of years of amity and prosperity.

By 1367, pogroms started up again, with an estimated 10,000 Jews killed and countless others dispersed.

But before the pendulum of history swung back to renew lethal discrimination against the Jews, the region’s prosperity was undeniable

and of benefit to all.

And the bracteate coins were key to this peace and prosperity.

The bracteate coins were uniface with a raised device only on the obverse. The reverse displayed a negative impression of the coin’s obverse.

To create these bracteate coins, the coiner would swing a hammer die onto a planchet backed by some type of soft material, leather perhaps, or lead.

This soft backing allowed the bracteate to be fully struck on both sides with just one blow.

On numerous bracteates, Jewish

*Continued*

# IN TIME OF TURMOIL, AN ISLE OF PEACE

*Continued*

coiners added in Hebrew the names of their ruling princes or legends designated by their ruling princes.

This was a rather extraordinary development for the time.

The bracteates themselves represent a period of calm for the Jewish people and their faith in a seemingly relentless run of centuries of attacks, discrimination and pogroms.

That is an aspect of history that should make the Polish bracteates of the era highly collectible.

But the fragility of the bracteates tends to work against them in the modern era of collectibles. Our era demands high levels of detail, premium specimens in Mint condition.

Very few bracteates exist in ultra condition. Most have seen a short life of heavy use, one that ends quickly with a hammer descending.

So, just how crazy was the 56-year period that saw 15 different High Dukes?

Mieszko III's rule began in 1173. Preceding his initial rule, and for the better part of the 12th century, a series of rebellions and heavy battles among his forebears kept the position in a state of flux.

Turmoil continued and spun up past Mieszko III's initial rule (1173 to 1177) when his brother Casimir II forced Mieszko III out and ruled from 1177 to 1190.

Mieszko III booted Casimir II out in 1190, only to lose to him,

again, just a few months later, also in 1190.

The ascension of Leszek I in 1194 seemed to settle the fratricidal battle, but Mieszko III grabbed the High Duke position for the third time in 1198. He ruled about a year, until 1199 when Leszek I took back the High Duke position.

Leszek I's initial rule as High Duke was short lived. Mieszko III regained the High Duke position in 1199, ruling until 1202 when his son Wladyslaw III "Spindleshanks" reigned for a few months.

Leszek I appeared to consolidate his hold on the High Duke throne in 1202, but he lasted only until 1210, when Mieszko III's grandson and the son of Wladyslaw III "Spindleshanks," Mieszko IV "Tanglefoot" assumed the High Duke seat from 1210 to 1211.

Leszek I regained the High Duke seat in 1211 and held on to it until 1225 when Henryk I "the Bearded" was named High Duke. His rule didn't last long. Leszek I returned to rule in 1125 and ruled until 1227 when he was assassinated.

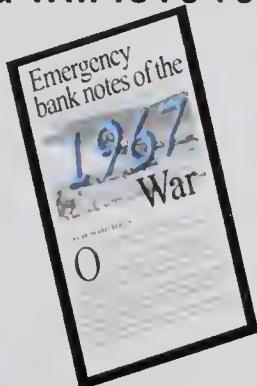
This too brief recounting of a truly bewildering period in the history of Poland.

Yet amidst the turmoil was an island of comparative serenity for its Jewish populace, and this fact shows how far removed the battles for power can be from the people who keep society humming. ☐

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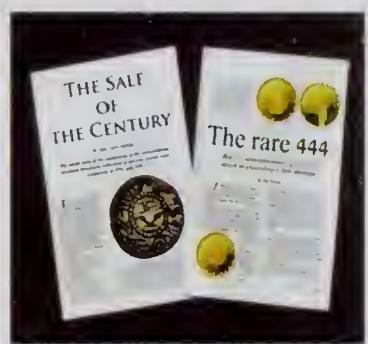
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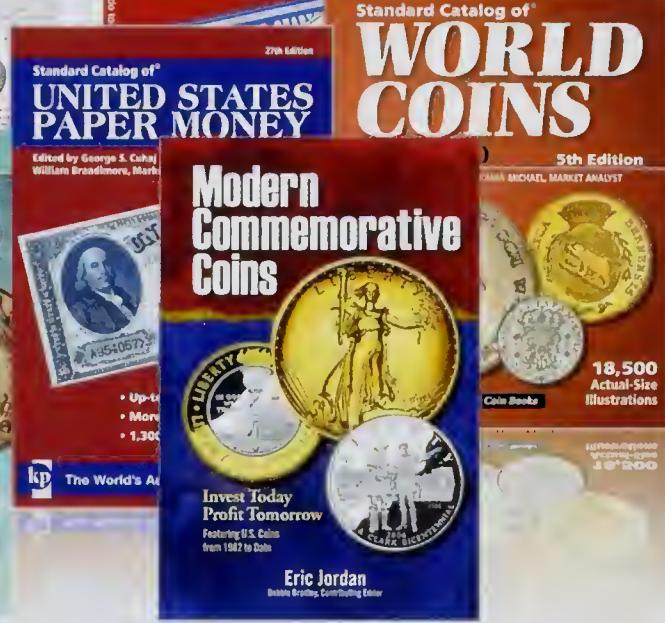
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